

Remarks:

Responsive to the Official Action mailed March 1, 2005, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration, reexamination and allowance of claims 1-9 in view of the following remarks.

First, with respect to the drawings, submitted herewith are 21 sheets of formal drawings to replace the drawings in the application file. Applicant submits that the drawings objections have been addressed by the formal drawings.

As to the claims, Examiner Nguyen has first rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §112 in that there is no antecedent basis for the spring. The Examiner properly notes that if claim 9 were to depend from claim 7 rather than claim 6, the antecedent basis issue would be resolved. Applicant has amended claim 9 accordingly and thanks Examiner Nguyen for his assistance in this matter.

Next, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as unpatentable over Annis, U.S. Patent No. 4,605,456. The Examiner characterizes Annis as discloses a strapping machine comprising a frame, a strap material supply, a strapping head, with a strap path being defined from the strap material supply to the strapping head (and refers to the phantom line in figure 1). The Examiner states further that the strapping head includes a feed element for conveying the strap material during the feed mode in a first direction around the load and for conveying the strap material in a second, opposite direction to tension the strap material around the load. The Examiner further provides that Annis discloses that the strapping head includes a rotating winder for tensioning the material around the load and that the winder has a peripheral strap path and a central strap path, and in which the strap material moves through the central strap path when the strap material is conveyed in the first and second directions and wraps around the peripheral strap path after the strap material has moved in the second direction. Further, the Examiner states that when in the tensioning mode, the strapping head includes a winder arm configured to cooperate with the winder and that the winder arm is biased to rest against the winder to direct strap material to a predetermined region (between elements 104 and 118) of the strapping machine when the strapping machine transitions from the rewind mode to the feed mode. In addition,

the Examiner states that Annis also discloses tensioning the strap material and sealing the strap material to itself around the load.

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 6 (the independent claims) to more clearly define the invention. Specifically, the claimed invention is directed to a winder arrangement for a strapping machine. The winder arrangement includes a rotating winder for tensioning the material around the load. The winder has a peripheral strap path and a central strap path. The strap material moves through the central strap path when the strap material is conveyed in the first and second directions and wraps around the peripheral strap path after the strap material has moved in the second direction and when in the tensioning mode.

A winder arm is configured for cooperation with the winder. The winder arm is biased to rest against the winder to direct strap material to a predetermined region of the strapping machine when the strapping machine transitions from the rewind mode to the feed mode. The winder arm is configured to remain in contact with the winder peripheral strap path as the winder rotates.

Applicant submits that this is not what is disclosed in the Annis patent. Although the Annis patent discloses a biased roller mounted on a link (that contacts the high tension member), the roller is not intended to direct strap, nor does it remain in contact with the member (winder) peripheral strap path.

First, the roller of Annis is not intended to direct strap. There is nothing in the Annis patent that expressly discloses this function, nor is there anything in the Annis patent that would even suggest this to be the function of the roller. Rather, the function of the roller is to assure that the slot in the high tension member is properly oriented during the feed and tension operating modes of the strapper. Specifically, Annis provides that:

It is desirable to ensure the proper positioning of the rotatable high tension member 80 for receiving the strap 22 during the feeding and initial loop tightening steps. To this end, a detent mechanism is provided, and this includes at least one recess 102 in the periphery of the member 80. A roller 104 is provided for being received in one of the recesses 102. The roller 104 is mounted for rotation on a link 106 which is pivotally mounted to a support block 108. The roller 104 is normally biased against the high tension member 80 by a compression spring 110 acting between the link 106 and a support 112.

Two recesses 102 may be provided in a 180° spaced-apart relationship on the periphery of the rotatable high tension member 80. Although only one of the two recesses 102 would normally be effective to engage the roller 104, the provision of two such recesses 102 permits the rotatable high tension member 80 to be initially installed on the shaft 86 in either of two positions oriented 180° from each other.

Annis, col. 7, lines 9-28.

Thus, it is applicant's position that the roller of Annis has absolutely nothing to do with directing strap; rather it is concerned only with properly positioning the high tension member for strap feed and tension operation.

Moreover, the roller could not physically remain in contact with the winder peripheral strap path the entire time that the winder rotates. The periphery of the Annis member (80) includes a pair of recesses. As such, the roller must move in and out (or up and down) as the roller moves into and out of the recesses with rotation of the member. As the roller moves out of the recess (away from the central axis of the member), it must move off of the peripheral strap path. Thus, due to the physical design and configuration of the Annis high tension member, the roller cannot be maintained in physical contact with the member periphery.

For the reasons noted above, Applicant submits that claims 1-9 are allowable over the art of record and in condition for allowance and respectfully and earnestly solicits early indication of same.

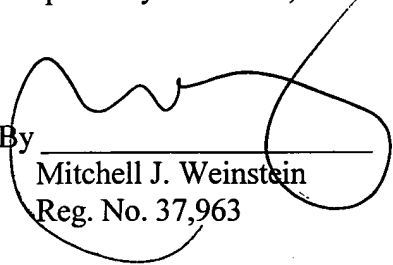
Applicant submits that no fee is due in connection with the present AMENDMENT A. If, however, there is a fee due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-0920. Should any petitions be necessary, it is respectfully requested that the present paper constitute any such necessary petition.

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Art Unit 3725

Amendment A

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would expedite prosecution and allowance of the present application, or address any outstanding formal issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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